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-- REMARKS --

The present amendment replies to a First Non-Final Office Action dated June 6, 2003. Claims 1-22 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 1, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21 and 22 have been amended and new claim 23 has been added to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention of the present application. No new matter has been introduced by the amendment of Claims 1, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21-22 or the addition of claim 23.

In the First Non-Final Office Action, Examiner Siconolfi rejected pending claims 1-22 on various grounds. The Applicants respond to each ground of rejection as subsequently recited herein, and respectfully request reconsideration and further examination of the present application under 37 CFR § 1.112:

- A. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by Mevissen et al., US Patent No. 5,326,084.

The rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14 and 15 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,326,084 to Mevissen et al. (hereinafter "the Mevissen Patent") is respectfully traversed. The Applicants have thoroughly considered Examiner Siconolfi's remarks concerning the patentability of independent claims 1 and 11 over the Mevissen Patent. The Applicants have also thoroughly read the Mevissen Patent.

The Applicants assert that the Mevissen Patent does not teach or disclose all of the limitations of the Applicant's invention as claimed by the current amendment. Claims 1 and 11, as amended, include the limitation of "a spring seat bracket having a shelf, a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion". The Mevissen Patent does not teach these limitations. The Mevissen Patent teaches a sleeve having a single bearing portion for attachment of the suspension. See, the Mevissen Patent at column 2, lines 46-52. The Mevissen Patent therefore fails to disclose, teach, or

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suggest a spring seat bracket having a shelf, and connections for both a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion. Therefore, the Mevissen Patent does not disclose, teach, or suggest every claimed element of the Applicants' invention and thus, cannot anticipate the invention as claimed by Applicants.

Withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Mevissen Patent is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 8 and 10 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, dependent claims 4, 8, 10 include all of the elements and limitations of independent claim 1. Claims 14 and 15 depend from independent claim 11. Therefore, dependent claims 14 and 15 include all of the elements and limitations of independent claim 11. It is therefore respectfully submitted by the Applicants that claims 4, 8, 10, 11, 14 and 15 are allowable over the Mevissen Patent for at least the same reason as set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 11. Withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 4, 8, 10, 11, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Mevissen Patent is therefore respectfully requested. Claim 3 has been cancelled by the current amendment, therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claim 3 is respectfully requested.

B. Claims 1, 4, and 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by Sakai US Patent No. 3,573,880.

The rejection of claims 1, 4, and 8-11 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,573,880 to Sakai et al. (hereinafter "the Sakai Patent") is respectfully traversed. The Applicants have thoroughly considered Examiner Siconolfi's remarks concerning the patentability of independent claims 1 and 11 over the Sakai Patent. The Applicants have also thoroughly read the Sakai Patent.

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The Applicants assert that the Sakai Patent does not teach or disclose all of the limitations of the Applicant's invention as claimed by the current amendment. Claims 1 and 11, as amended, include the limitations of "a spring seat bracket having a shelf, a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion". The Sakai Patent does not teach these limitations. The Sakai Patent teaches a bracket 13 that supports a pin 12 that is, in turn, fixed to a spring seat 11. See, the Sakai Patent at column 3, lines 9-16. The Sakai Patent therefore fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a spring seat bracket having a shelf, and connections for both a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion. Therefore, the Sakai Patent does not disclose, teach, or suggest every claimed element of the Applicants' invention and thus, cannot anticipate the invention as claimed by Applicants.

Withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Sakai Patent is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 8-10 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, dependent claims 4 and 8-10 include all of the elements and limitations of independent claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted by the Applicants that claims 4 and 8-10 are allowable over the Sakai Patent for at least the same reason as set forth above with respect to independent claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 4 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Sakai Patent is therefore respectfully requested.

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C. Claims 1, 4, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by Muller et al. US Patent No. 4,545,601.

The rejection of claims 1, 4, 10 and 11 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,545,601 to Muller et al. (hereinafter "the Muller Patent") is respectfully traversed. The Applicants have thoroughly considered Examiner Siconolfi's remarks concerning the patentability of independent claims 1 and 11 over the Muller Patent. The Applicants have also thoroughly read the Muller Patent.

The Applicants assert that the Muller Patent does not teach or disclose all of the limitations of the Applicant's invention as claimed by the current amendment. Claims 1 and 11, as amended, include the limitations of "a spring seat bracket having a shelf, a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion". The Muller Patent does not teach these limitations. The Muller Patent therefore fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a spring seat bracket having a shelf, and connections for both a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion. Therefore, the Muller Patent does not disclose, teach, or suggest every claimed element of the Applicants' invention and thus, cannot anticipate the invention as claimed by Applicants.

Withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Muller Patent is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 10 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, dependent claims 4 and 10 include all of the elements and limitations of independent claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted by the Applicants that claims 4 and 10 are allowable over the Muller Patent for at least the same reason as set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 11. Withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 4 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Muller Patent is therefore respectfully requested.

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D. Claims 5-7, 16-20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller et al. US Patent No. 4,545,601.

The Applicants have thoroughly considered Examiner Siconolfi's remarks concerning the patentability of claims 5-7, 16-20 and 22 over the Muller Patent. The Applicants respectfully traverse this 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection.

As the Examiner is well aware, in order to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness under § 103(a), all of the *claimed* elements of the invention must be taught or suggested by the prior art (MPEP § 2143.03). As discussed above, the Muller Patent does not teach or suggest a spring seat bracket having a shelf, a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion as is claimed in independent claims 1 and 16. Furthermore, the Muller Patent does not motivate one with skill in the art to modify the spindle support of Muller to include both a mounting bracket portion and a stabilizer bar bracket portion as that of the present invention. Thus, a finding of obviousness under § 103(a), for independent claim 16 must fail. The Applicants request a withdrawal of the rejection of claim 16 under § 103(a).

With regard to dependent claims 5-7, 17-20 and 22, these dependent claims depend from independent claims 1 and 16 that are non-obvious as discussed above. As the Examiner knows, where an independent claim is non-obvious, any claim depending therefrom is also non-obvious. *See*, MPEP 2143. Applicants, therefore, request the withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 5-7, 17-20 and 22 under § 103(a).

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E. Claims 2, 3, 12-15 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller et al. US Patent No. 4,545,601 in view of Handke et al. US Patent No. 5,622,242.

The Applicants have thoroughly considered Examiner Siconolfi's remarks concerning the patentability of claims 2, 3, 12-15 and 21 over the Muller Patent in view of the Handke Patent. The Applicants respectfully traverse this 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection.

Claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled by the present amendment. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for claims 2 and 3 is respectfully requested.

Claims 12-15 are dependent claims, depending from claim 11. If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious. MPEP 2143.03, In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ 1596 (Fed Cir. 1988). Since claim 11 is patentable over Muller in view of Handke, claims 12-15 are therefore patentable over Muller in view of Handke. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 12-15 is requested.

However, even if claims 12-15 had been properly rejected, claims 12-15 are still patentable over Muller in view of Handke as each and every limitation of the instant invention is not taught or suggested by over Muller in view of Handke. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is requested.

Claim 21 is a dependent claim, depending from claim 16. . If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious. MPEP 2143.03, In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ 1596 (Fed Cir. 1988). Since claim 16 is patentable over Muller in view of Handke, claim 22 is therefore patentable over Muller in view of Handke. Withdrawal of the rejections of claim 21 is requested.

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SUMMARY

Examiner Siconolfi's 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b), and 103(a) rejections of claims 1-22 have been obviated by the above amendments and remarks. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-23 fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103 and 112. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application are respectfully requested.

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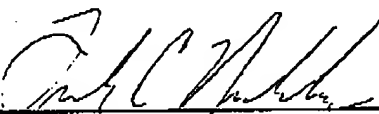
Respectfully submitted,
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